

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

**Table 2 - Summary of Responses
*Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center***

What do you think are the Parks Department's core service functions? What are its ancillary service functions?

Round #1:

- Mike
- Donna
- Charles
- Doug
- Karen
- David
- Ruth

To me the core is outdoor space. Parks are a sanctuary. They allow us to get away. They provide community activities. Parks are our highly improves spaces.

Parks provide a sanctuary, a spiritual space, an out where we can escape. Contrast to a mall. With Parks, we can turn our back to escape. Discovery Parks is a place where we can go to get away.

Core service is for Parks to provide space plus activities related to parks, such as nature walks.

Core is to provide safe, family-friendly and clean places. In these times, we need parks for groups like parents to take their children. There are a few precious things left for families to do that are affordable.

Core is a learning environment. Parks is the outdoors, nature.

In an urban setting, parks are a reminder that not everything is given to man. We have lakes, and can take walks: these are the services of parks.

Core is to provide neighborhood parks, to build community. Parks are a casual atmosphere where neighbors gather and seek one another. Community building is what Parks core is. Neighborhood pockets become a destination. Parks are our front porch.

There three functions for Parks. 1) Large destination parks such as South Lake Union or Magnuson. 2) Community efforts that become the center such as pocket parks. 3) Specialty parks such as Kubota.

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

Before we talk about core functions, we need to know what makes Parks system most expensive in country. Why is that? We seem to be doing lots that is small scale. We have lots of special efforts like Environmental Learning Centers and Camp Long.

We have a tendency to talk about ancillary as if they are less important, like maintenance. But maintenance is not ancillary. Parks cannot survive without the ancillary.

If we had to name some, perhaps small programs could be considered ancillary: this does mean that they are less important.

Need to think about the whole issue. Why aren't Senior Centers part of DPR? Aren't they core? We need to look at expanding, making system more fundamental.

Maintenance is (and should be) a core function. It seems to be neglected. Is there a way to create volunteer opportunities? Can we create volunteer programs in our neighborhood parks? Maybe have neighborhoods be responsible for a percentage of maintenance? We already have groups like "Friends of....."

There is a problem with Parks and volunteers. They (DPR) won't let volunteers use equipment so the roles are limited. There ought to be a way to utilize volunteers.

Lifelong Recreation does volunteer training. That could be a model.

Restrooms. Restroom should be a core function.

They should be open and clean. Accessible and maintained.

Parks core should serve small children to seniors. One shouldn't have to wear a scuba outfit because things aren't clean.

Can volunteers clean the restrooms?

Ensure numbers of volunteers is important. It is easier said than done.

We cannot continue to sacrifice for functions of DPR. Council and elected need to be brave and have a serious talk about revenues and taxes.

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

I just attended the Thornton Creek auction. I went because I can afford to go. I am watching as our primary functions are abrogated. I am getting tired of going with less and less. Every time there is a shortage in revenue, there is a hand in my pocket.

We need to keep things free. Parks should be free. Maybe a voluntary tax? Text a number to donate (fundraising).

Parks core is to provide safety and sanctuaries.

Open space and a way to build community. Those are the cores. Everything else should come after that.

To provide nature.

And lighting.

Round #2:

- David
- David
- Mary
- Rob
- Mike
- Jeanne

I'm new to this so I don't really understand how this works. Recreation Centers, where do they fit in this? Parks seems to serve a complex role. They should provide community a space and all roles should be served by Parks.

Core is open space, green space, places so we can enjoy space.

Open space for young families to enjoy activities. Places for low-income. Parks should make community assets available. For some, our parks are the only opportunity to enjoy activities. It is the only place to experience nature.

Parks core is to provide nature. Nature isn't a place for Starbucks.

Parks core is also for middle income as well. Sometimes we can't afford to go elsewhere. Arena Sports is only available to some.

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

Core is to give us places of beauty in the city. To provide functions like being able to walk outdoors. Parks makes city livable. That is the core of Parks, livable.

Core is outdoors. The walks, trails, gardens.

Parks core services are community. I echo what has already been said. Safety is core. Core is open space, gathering space. Open space is skewed towards non-programmed as much as possible. With open space/parks, you see people gathering, people playing Frisbee, not all recreation caters to organized sports.. Core is places where anyone can go regardless of money. Find programs that are low-cost and as broad as possible, affordable to everyone. In tough times, open space are the most important things we have.

Core is not housing office space in our Community Centers.

Swimming pools are ancillary.

Activities like baseball, field programs are core.

Pottery classes are ancillary.

Playfields and Community Centers are central functions.

Restrooms are core. We don't have to provide services that bring a certain return on investment.

(When asked about Carkeek)...has a nice playground, picnic area. It's a popular place like Discovery Park. Green space is necessary for activities.

Because we have so much water surrounding us, Parks should keep access to all of our parks as a core function. Work with what we have. Provide water based activities to take advantage of the natural bodies of water.

Habitat is core. It is core because it is disappearing. We need habitat so we can be exposed to nature, the frogs at night. Walk nightly in the woods.

Maintenance is also key.

Round #3:

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

- Thatcher
- Deejah
- Gregory
- Gloria
- Owen

Core is to provide recreation services for people and land for plants and animals. Acquire land for animals and plants. We need open space as we experience overcrowding.

Core is to maintain what we have. If we got it then we need to take care of it.

What is 'to maintain what we have'? Is it acquisition?

Right now we need to prioritize before we acquire.

Maintain what we have now before we add to the system.

There's nothing that addresses maintenance. Care for what we have.

Core of Parks also ties in with Public safety and Education. Community Centers and initiatives help with childcare and vulnerable youth. We need to find a ways and places for teens to go. Need to provide recreation for teen peers.

Core services are community plus major projects plus public safety and education.

Core of Parks is the act of connections. Connecting through spaces, trails, communities, economy. Parks provide the civic well-being.

What about bike trails? Parks keeps the city from becoming an urban wasteland. Parks gives a place for kids to go, things to do. Recreational activities (like SSP) are core.

Ancillary might be pure outreach programs like classes. Recreational pools might be ancillary.

Core for Parks is to be responsive to needs of the community: community is children, youth and seniors. Seniors are the fastest growing demographic yet the first to be bumped as far as services.

Core service is to look at the community and their needs.

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

Aquarium, Zoo and Golf are ancillary. We could do without or those fees could be increased to pay for core needs. What if those services were really fee-based? Could higher fees of those be used for maintenance?

Need to keep in mind that if we keep increasing fees, we could reach a point where people stop participating so we lose.

Bathrooms are core. They need to be cleaned and maintained. Core is open and green spaces that are accessible to everybody.

Parks is about providing open spaces. Hubbard Homestead doesn't have bathrooms. These facilities are core to our parks.

Back to Aquarium and Zoo for a moment. For me, these partnerships provide resources that go back into system which reduces costs.

Round #4:

- Jeremy
- Susanna
- Morry
- Margaret
- Phil

Core is green and trees

Grass and recreation.

Core of Parks should serve the entire population, all citizens and taxpayers.

Core is free. Low cost. Accessible.

At Cal Anderson, I can walk and roam. There are families, green space, activities. It is not about the monetary purpose. Culture,

Bathrooms are core. Make sure they are maintained and functioning. Core is to maintain public land. Core is to maintain our current system. We can't just let it go.

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

DPR's core seems to be to keep people employed. They should be more concerned about maintenance. DPR 'mows, blows, and edges'. We don't have to do those things. Let's focus on basic maintenance. Need to do the basics! Cleanliness is basic. Spiffing things up is not. Gave an example about the entry road to Magnuson on 65th is not necessary: it is not basics.

Appearances are important. Litter needs to be picked up. Better stewardship.

Core is to provide primary maintenance places for recreation and nature (both wild and groomed)

Centers are also important. Indoor opportunities are important: they are gathering places for communities. For DPR this should be a primary goal.

Programs are ancillary. It's not that they are not important but these can be reinstated when things look better. Construction is also ancillary. Leadership needs to understand this is not the 90s anymore. We need to maintain but not maintain in a lavish manner.

Volunteers, where do they fit in? We once had a mayor who encouraged volunteers; that has disappeared from our city. There is no one place for people to connect in the city.

With volunteers, there is a union pushback.

We should allow people to do what they want. There are lots of great programs that use volunteers. People volunteer as coaches. Need to do a better job of utilizing volunteers.

Parks are core functions for the city. I'm from the east coast and we have an incredible park system here. I've never felt unsafe in our parks. Ours are still viable. They are special places. They are safe.

Programming (ancillary).

Round #5:

- Don
- Ted

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

- Lynn
- Linnea
- Marilyn
- Julianna
- Bill

Our core is to maintain the current system, including buildings. For outdoors that means recreation; for indoor, that means meeting gathering spaces. I don't think of Community Centers as Parks.

Core is the outdoors and the wild of the city. Provide space so we don't need to travel outside the city.

Parks is a pathway. It starts with the very little and to seniors. It is a continuum. That pathway creates community. Parks should provide safe healthy places at a low cost. We need to talk about how to sustain entire system. Have to find a more stable model. Pathway of DPR is about health and safety. Parks contribution reduces need of law enforcement. It's preventative.

Core is not about outdoors, it is about lifelong health. Core is to make parks affordable for all citizens, for their health.

There's a joint core. At places like Magnuson, there is nature, plants and then there is the rehabilitation of buildings. Look at how we work on buildings and maintenance of buildings. Need to provide funding for maintenance and development. Core is low costs and core should not be commercial. Artists and seniors should have a place.

Building onto that, San Francisco has amazing pocket parks. They serve as an important place when nothing else is accessible. Magnuson is a waterfront park. Arena Sports is a deal gone bad. They provide a health club that is expensive. With Building 11 deal, it feels like we are creating a Country Club. Our core is to serve entire population and it should be affordable and not commercial.

Metro Parks District has been mentioned (at another table). Tacoma has it but what you don't see in Tacoma parks is kids. They are missing. Our costs will never be economical: that isn't role of parks.

2012 Parks Budget Community Conversations

Table 2 - Summary of Responses
Tuesday, May 3, 2011, Meadowbrook Community Center

It is difficult to pick an ancillary function. Don't want to pit group against group or community against community. How about we look at a different funding mechanism? We shouldn't just commercialize or parcel out to concessions. Maybe sponsors are okay. We need more scholarships to keep programs accessible. Teen sports. Gave example how we spend \$57K on jerseys. Maybe we should look at sponsorships for these types of things so we lower costs and get more kids involved. Think creatively and not just write a 40-year lease. Community deserves better.

Baseball, sport programs are core systems through DPR and senior programs. Special Pops. too. We need creative thinking.

Maintenance feels ancillary. It should be a core function. Preventive maintenance is important.

As far as maintenance, Parks has gotten into a bad place.

Acres plus construction plus budget does not make for a sustainable model.

Note taker: Kathy Nyland